

*Graduating Class of 1912*

FOR THE GIRLS OF CHINA

BEYOND the Pacific, in China, a new day is dawning for a nation numbering four hundred millions of people. Everyone is hastening to adopt western customs, western clothing, western learning. Women, who have heretofore been strictly secluded, and have had no opportunities outside the home, are now to take a real part in the nation's life, and must therefore be thoroughly educated. Schools for women are being opened by the government, and this means that such schools as St. Mary's Hall, Shanghai, where Christian teachers train the heart as well as the intellect, find themselves in competition with institutions of modern equipment, but conducted under non-Christian auspices. At the same time the growing demand for educated women in China presents an unparalleled opportunity for bringing a strongly influential class of girls directly under the teaching of the Church.

What, then, are we going to do about St. Mary's Hall? Every mail from China makes

us increasingly aware that if this splendid school is to maintain its rank in the forefront of educational institutions for girls in the New Republic, we must somehow secure for it more land, larger buildings, better equipment, and more teachers. It is remarkable that with such limited space and insufficient buildings, St. Mary's has been able to do so much for the womanhood of China. Its reputation has steadily grown, especially of late years, and many of the students are from families of good standing. Two hundred and seven girls have been enrolled this year, although the dormitories are only intended to hold one hundred and fifty; the dining-room capacity is also entirely insufficient, and tables have to be placed in the one reception room and in the hall. The class rooms are far too few and too small. There are no suitable rooms for music practice or for drawing classes. The girls are much interested in both drawing and music; and so many of them play well on the piano that they ought to have a music hall for their lessons and practicing, as well as a library and reading-room, where books can be freely consulted. At present the books have to be kept in a corner of the music-room, and so can only be used when musical work is not going on.

Another very pressing need is for a gymnasium; many of the girls are narrow-chested and not vigorous, and need to be taught how to exercise and to play games.

Even if we had the money for a new building, however, it could not possibly be erected on the present site. The school buildings are too near St. John's College; which institution is also growing rapidly and wants St. Mary's to leave, so that the College may have the whole plant! Just at this time, too, there is an unusual opportunity to buy a piece of land, between six and



THE FACULTY AT ST. MARY'S HALL

seven acres, separated by a road from the old compound, and offered for sale at a moderate price. Should it be possible for the school to buy this land, which Miss Dodson has for a long time wanted, there would be enough space for the new buildings, and for a large campus, with plenty of room for drills and games; the girls and teachers would not be too far away to continue to avail themselves of the services of the professors, and of the ministrations of the clergy; they could still attend the Pro-Cathedral, and brothers and sisters could still come and go together at holiday-time.

Bishop Graves estimates that this purchase of land and the erection of the necessary buildings upon it would cost about \$75,000. No doubt this seems a large sum to expend at this time when so many claims are pressing; but let us try, with the help of the graphic letters from St. Mary's teachers, which every China mail brings to the Church Missions House, to form a clear conception of the work, and to understand its importance.

"Isn't it great," writes one of them, "to live in a world where things are beginning? This has been a wonderful week. Sunday afternoon two of the older heathen girls were baptized—quite an unusual thing. Yesterday afternoon after Bible Class two other girls came up and said, 'Will you come to our meeting this evening? The heathen girls ask us hard questions. Will you come and answer them?' Then with the most troubled and serious little faces (it is a very real thing to them) they told me some of the questions: 'God in Three Persons'; 'Why God let Jesus be tempted'; 'The Bible says, Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit



ST. MARY'S ASSEMBLY HALL IN THE PRESENT BUILDING

the earth. The earth is very dirty; why should they want to inherit it?' So last evening, after the nicest meeting the Tsing Sing We (Junior Auxiliary) has ever had, I went over to speak at the little voluntary meeting, as I had promised to do—and found it in the Assembly Hall, if you please, and more than fifty girls there. I suppose I ought to have been frightened; but they were my girls, and I forgot everything except how sweet it was to just look at them, and to talk to them, in the simplest way, about Faith. I spoke to the Christian girls, and then to the non-Christians, and warned the latter to be careful to ask questions in the right spirit, and not just to see whether the Christian girls could answer them. They had some hymns, and little Seur Tsung said some prayers, and it was all as sweet as it could be. * * * And yet some people say that missionary work is just like work at home, especially in the schools! How can they? God is working in this school in a very special way, and it is the result of all the years that have gone before. I cannot be thankful enough to be here; and am so grateful to Miss Dodson for letting me help her with the part of the work I love best."

The writer of these words, and indeed everyone connected with the school, seems to feel that there is an unusual amount of religious interest this winter among the girls. This is, no doubt, the natural result of the many years of faithful work by principal and teachers, and our prayers here at home have helped; but the present awakening is also due in part to the ministry of the Rev. Dr. Tsu, who, in addition to his other duties in Shanghai, has been acting as Rector of the school during the winter. His preaching is admirably suited to the comprehension of the girls, and his class in "political science" has aroused their interest and enthusiasm to an unusual degree.

Doctor Tsu is more than a good teacher, however; his great gift is evangelistic. He has recently opened a preaching hall near the compound,—opened it with the St. John's brass band playing outside, and a huge crowd of interested hearers. Among other things he is planning to have a day school for girls connected with it. His sister is to teach in it, and the girls of his class at St. Mary's will support it.

But this is not the only way in which our girls are learning to "put their faith to work." To quote once more:

I told you about the play the little tots gave "for the poor." On Saturday the middle-sized girls gave another for the same purpose; not one play, but three, for the Chinese are an essentially dramatic people, you know, and generous with talent and time. "Coaching" spoils it all; but just leave them to themselves and they think up the whole thing as they go along, and are as natural and un-self-conscious as can be. The unities of time, place, and action never disturb them in the least. They can introduce a boat scene in the middle of a drawing-room by simply working the sweeps.

One of the plays had for its hero a native Christian teacher who was driven out from home, and had all sorts of trials, and finally died from the bite of a dog. At least we supposed it was a dog when it barked. The servants who had treated the poor man so cruelly were overcome at his death, and finding his Bible started to read it, exclaiming "too late!" as the curtain was drawn. I suppose it was a serious play. Some of the children cried.

After the play they had cakes and tea and peanuts enough to go around, and they were dear to the little orphans who had come with Miss Cartwright, sending them away happy and smiling, pockets bulging, and laps full of nuts and fruit. The girls thought up and carried out the whole thing themselves, and the \$30 which they had made is to go "to the poor." Chinese girls have not always thought of the poor at Christmas time.

Another entertainment was given on Sunday afternoon for Miss Cartwright's girls, the entire orphanage being invited, from Miss Cartwright down to the two-year-old babies. Four of the girls went over and brought the children, giving them the very best seats in the Assembly Hall.

The hall was made very dark, and at the same moment a lighted Christmas tree appeared on the stage, and a fearful and wonderful Santa Claus came in at the other end, throwing confetti right and left as he walked up to the stage. There the other girls gave him rows and rows of bright little paper balloons that had been hanging about the stage, and Santa Claus took them all down to the little orphans, with packages of candy and fruit and peanuts, done up in little bright papers * * * After the last present had been given out, Santa thanked us all for coming, wished us all a Merry Christmas, and making a circle around the tree, they sang a verse of a Christmas carol with the Amen. There was a lump in my throat and I couldn't see very well for a minute. Do you realize that those blessed girls, some of them poor girls who will have no other Christmas than the one the school can give them, had thought of the little orphans and given them such a Christmas as they had never had in their short lives? Could anyone have better understood the Christmas spirit?

Is not such work worth while? We must have the land and the buildings. We here at home must find the teachers, and train them, and send them out; we must follow them with our love and prayers; we must give them what they need for their work. For "this day is a day of good tidings," and shall we—to whom God has given so much and so bounteously—shall we "hold our peace?"

This pamphlet may be obtained from The Literature Department, Board of Missions, 281 Fourth Avenue, New York. Ask for No. 204.

All offerings for Missions should be sent to Mr. George Gordon King, Treasurer, Church Mission House, 281 Fourth Avenue, New York.